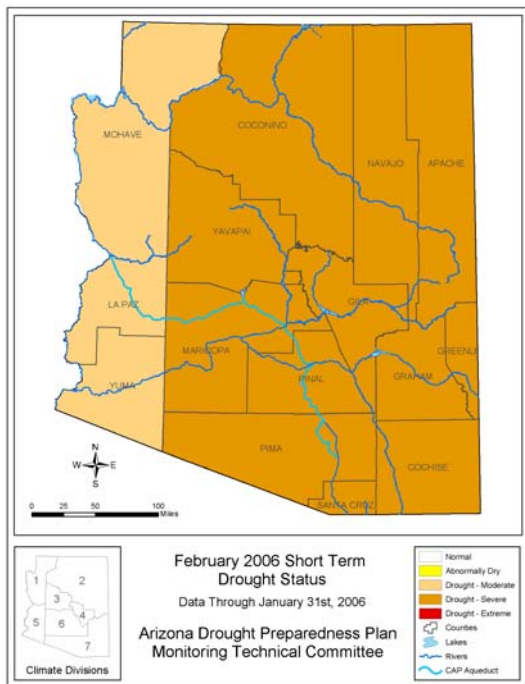


February Drought Monitor Report



Produced by the Monitoring Technical Committee

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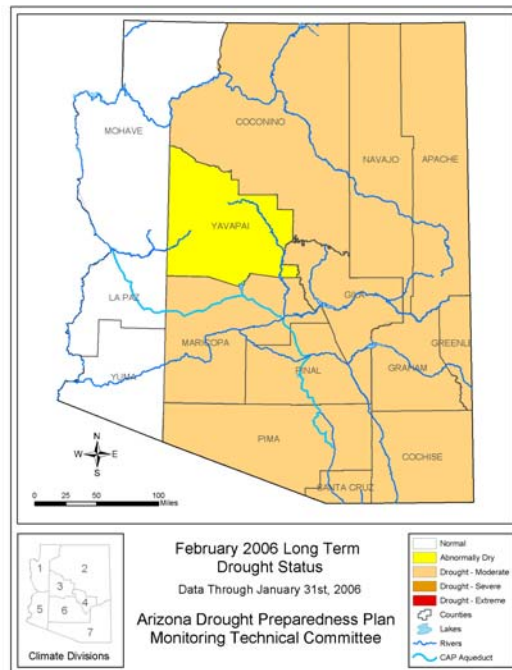
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Arizona's short-term drought status is severe in the majority of the state. Moderate drought conditions exist in the north- and south-west regions.

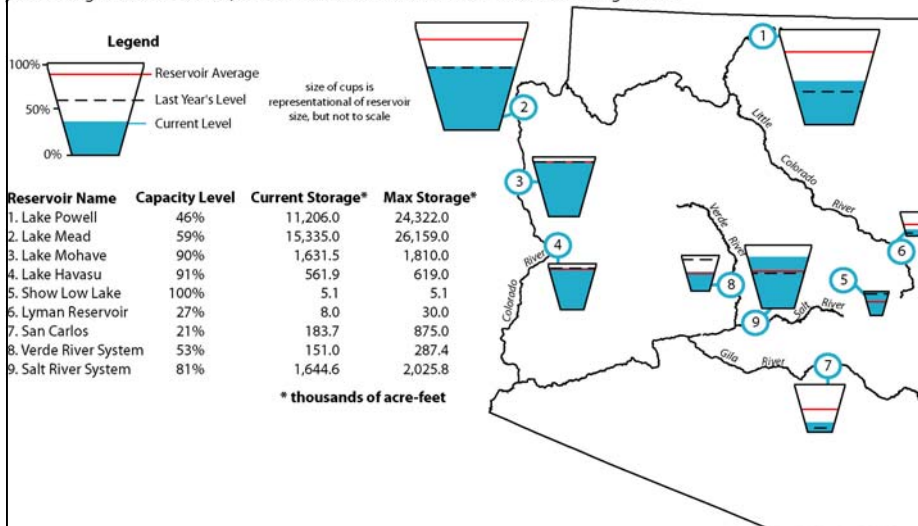
Drought Decision Triggers

www.azwater.gov

Arizona's long-term drought status is moderate in the majority of the state. East-central Arizona is abnormally dry while the north- and south-west regions are normal.

Reservoir Storage Assessment

Arizona reservoir levels for January 2006 as a percent of capacity. The map also depicts the average level and last year's storage for each reservoir, while the table also lists current and maximum storage levels.



Storage remained approximately steady in the Verde River System, Lyman Reservoir and Show Low Lake. Storage in the Salt River System decreased by approximately 1% since December 31, 2005. Data through January 31, 2006, indicates that, since December 31, 2005, reservoir storage decreased in the Colorado River reservoirs. The combined storage in the four large Colorado River reservoirs (Powell, Mead, Mohave, Havasu) decreased by approximately 186,000 acre-feet between the end of December, 2005 and the end of January, 2006; current combined storage for these reservoirs is approximately 54% of capacity. Upper Colorado River Basin snow water content has decreased by on the order of approximately 10% during the past two weeks; above-average temperatures, which may have contributed to snowmelt, have been reported in northeastern Utah in north-western Colorado.

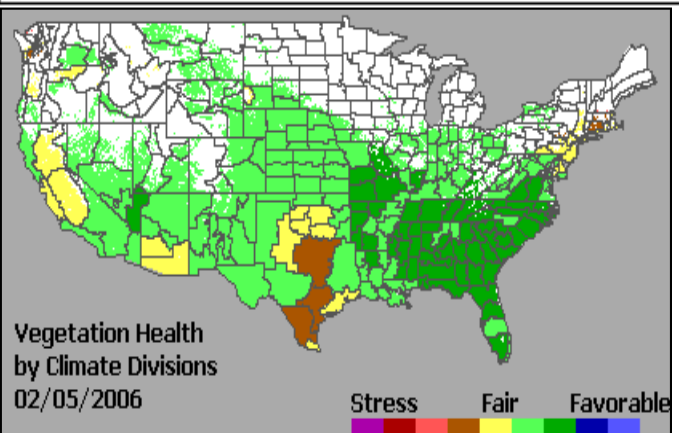
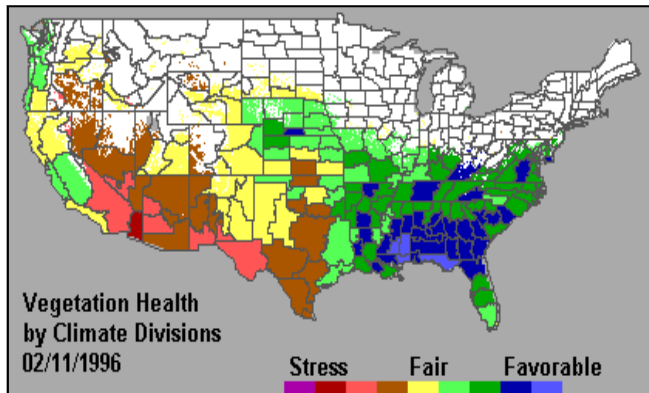
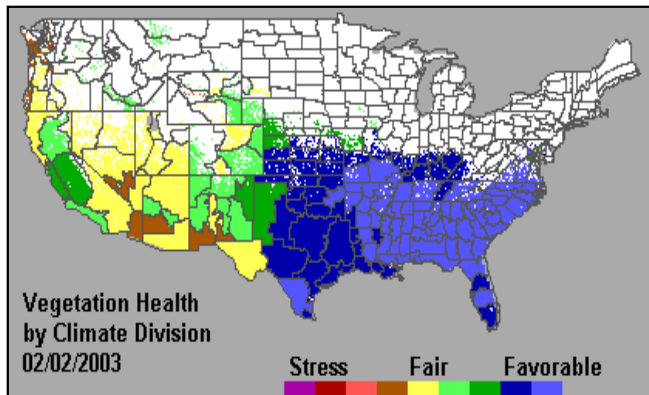
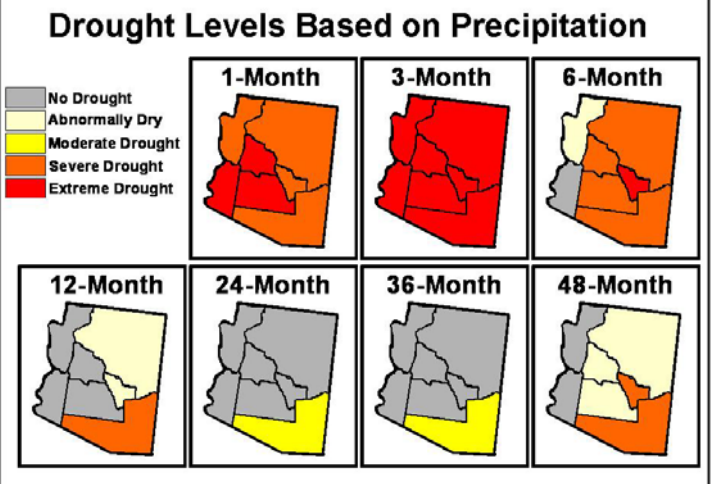
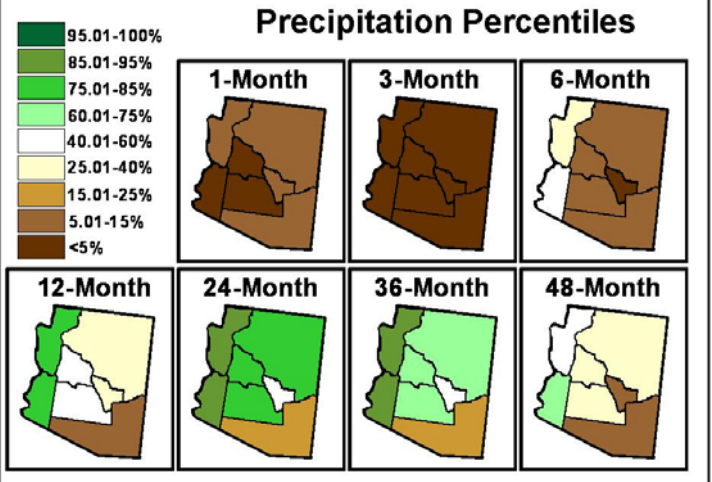
Climate Assessment

Temperature & Precipitation

The recent warm and extremely dry conditions continued across the entire state of Arizona during January 2006. Two areas of the state (southwest, south-central) witnessed a second straight month with no precipitation. Two other regions of the state that recorded no precipitation in December received only a marginal amount in January. The momentum of the wet fall and winter conditions of 2004-05 has ended across almost the entire state in the metric of the Palmer Drought Severity Index. The re-emergence of extremely dry conditions across all regions of the state is clearly evident; the low precipitation totals from November 2005 through January 2006 are virtually unprecedented within the 112-year record.

On the longer term, there is much less evidence of drought across Arizona over the past 12-to-36 months, with generally greater than normal precipitation during the period. The exception is across southeastern Arizona, where drought conditions are evident in the precipitation totals for the past 12-month ("severe drought") and 24-36-month ("moderate drought") periods. Conversely, the western edge of the state has been rather wet during the same period. Overall, the southeastern and east-central regions of Arizona continue to struggle with long-term precipitation totals suggestive of drought.

For full assessment, see *State Climate Update for Arizona – Conditions through November 2005*
www.public.asu.edu/~dellis/update.html.



Vegetation Status

As of the beginning of February 2006 (top image), climate division-scale satellite-measured vegetation health is fair or favorable, with the lowest vegetation health index values in southern Arizona. For comparison, note the marked difference between current vegetation health and that of early February 2003 (middle image), and early February 1996 (bottom image).

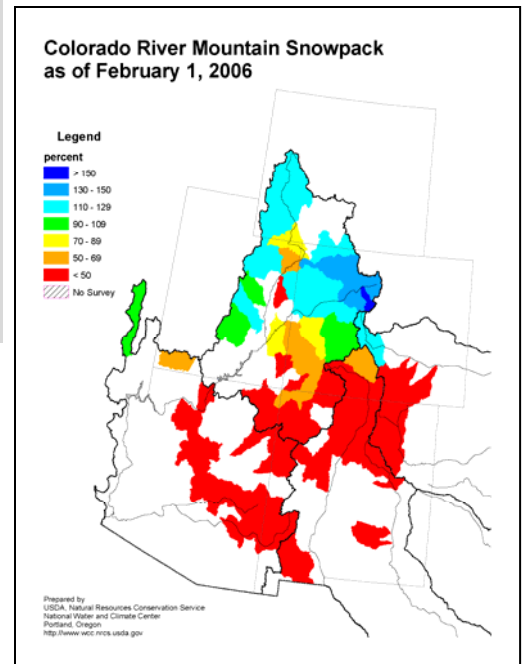
www.orbit.nesdis.noaa.gov/smcd/emb/vci/usavhcd.html.

Streamflow & Runoff

Mountain Precipitation

Data from high elevation SNOTEL stations show that precipitation for January was 14 percent of average over the Salt River basin, 10 percent over the Verde River basin, and 20 percent of average over the San Francisco-Upper Gila River basin. The Little Colorado River basin received 14 percent of average precipitation in January.

Extremely low snowpacks were monitored in January for the Salt, Verde, San Francisco, Gila, and Little Colorado River basins, while water year precipitation is low in all basins ranging from 23 percent to 34 percent of average. As a result, much below median runoff is forecast for all basins through springtime.



Watershed	Percent (%) of 30-Yr. Average	
	Snowpack as of February 1	Precipitation Oct. 1-Jan.
Salt River Basin	12%	25%
Verde River Basin	4%	23%
Little Colorado River Basin	6%	23%
San Francisco-Upper Gila River Basin	18%	34%
Central Mogollon Rim	1%	17%
Grand Canyon	5%	21%
Arizona Statewide	13%	--
Upper Colorado River Basin	104%	110%

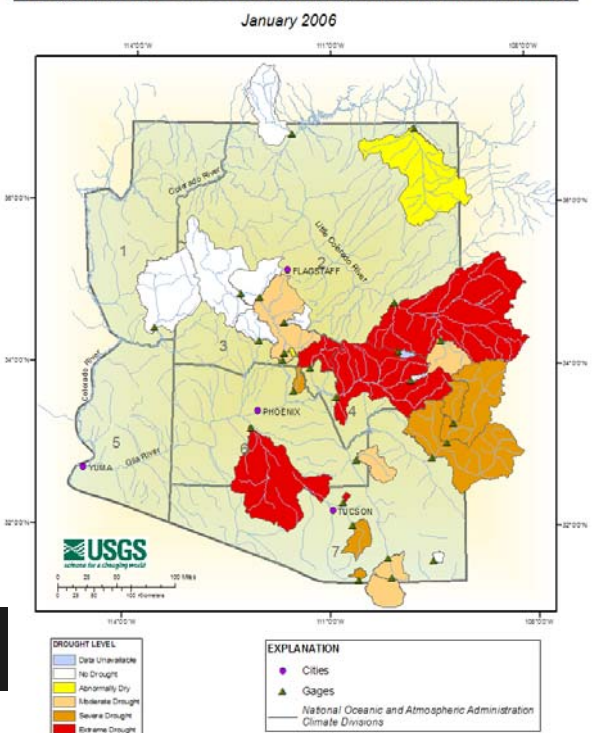
Snowpack Amounts and Water Year Precipitation (Source USDA-NRCS)

Runoff

Waterbody	January Runoff in Acre Feet	% of Median
Salt River near Roosevelt	10,201	46
Tonto Creek	748	21
Verde River at Horseshoe Dam	15,763	69
Combined Salt River Project reservoir system	26,712	52
Little Colorado River above Lyman Lake	200	40
Gila River to San Carlos reservoir	4,100	29
Colorado River inflow to Lake Powell	429,400	106% of the 30-yr. avg.

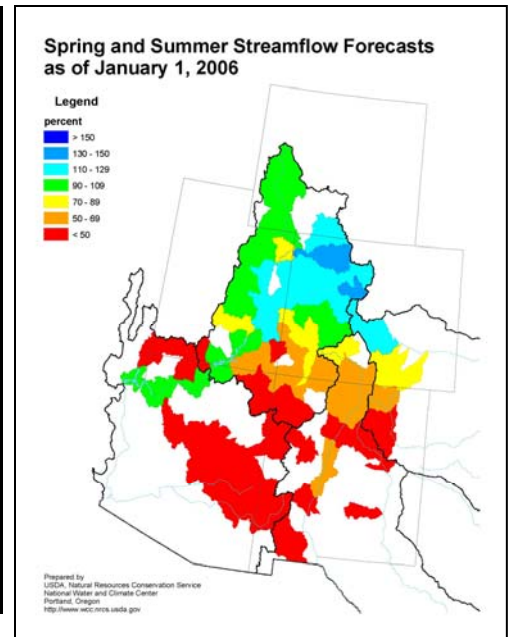
For more information, visit az.water.usgs.gov/droughtmaps/droughtmaps.htm.

Drought Levels Based on Monthly Streamflow Discharge



Streamflow Forecasts

Waterbody	Forecasted Runoff (Jan – May unless noted) in Acre Feet	% of Median
Salt River near Roosevelt	115,000	30
Tonto Creek	12,000	21
Verde River at Horseshoe Dam	105,000	48
San Francisco River at Clifton	17,000	24
Gila River near Soloman	45,000	27
San Carlos reservoir inflow	25,000	26
Little Colorado River above Lyman Lake	Jan – June - 1,700	23
Little Colorado River at Woodruff	310	9
Colorado River inflow to Lake Powell	April – July - 8.5 million	107% of the 30-yr. avg.
Virgin River at Littlefield	April – July - 30,000	41



DroughtWise

Drought conditions tend to draw attention to the importance of water conservation.

Saving water is something we should always practice to help maintain an abundant water supply. Water conservation is everyone's responsibility. Save water by washing full loads of laundry.

Drought Survival Tip - When you water a large shade tree, it is best to use a slow, steady stream of water for a long time rather than a lot of water at once (Sources: Water Conservation Alliance of Southern Arizona, landscape architect Patsy Waterfall and Tucson Organic Gardeners).

Remember - we live in a desert!



Photos courtesy of Kelly Redmond, Western Regional Climate Center

Weather Outlook

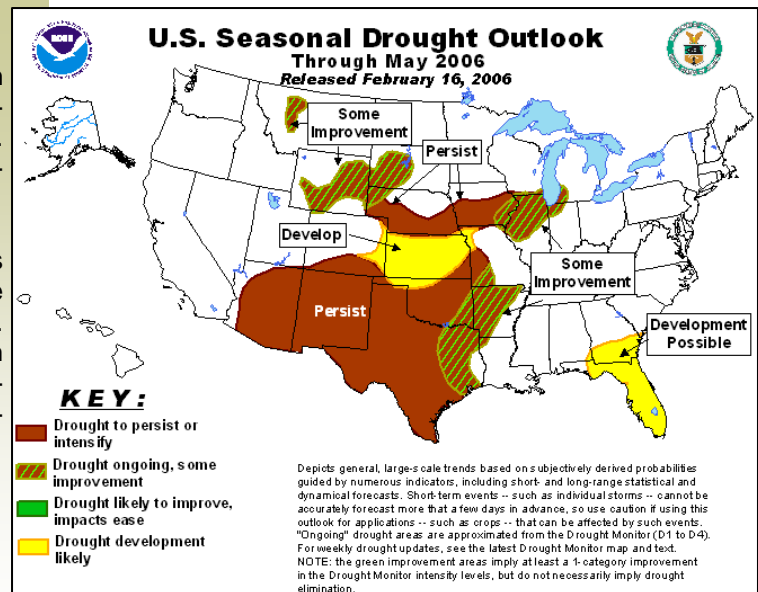
Climate & Drought Outlooks

The NOAA Climate Prediction Center (CPC) precipitation outlook for Arizona during March indicates modest confidence precipitation will be below average for the month. The CPC temperature outlook for March indicates confidence for above average temperatures statewide.

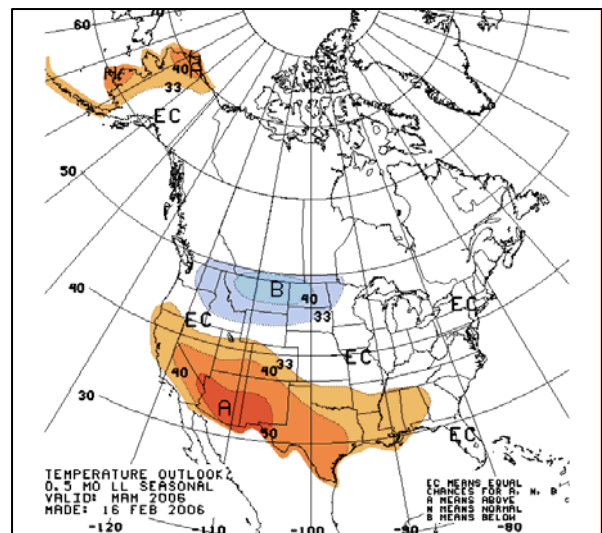
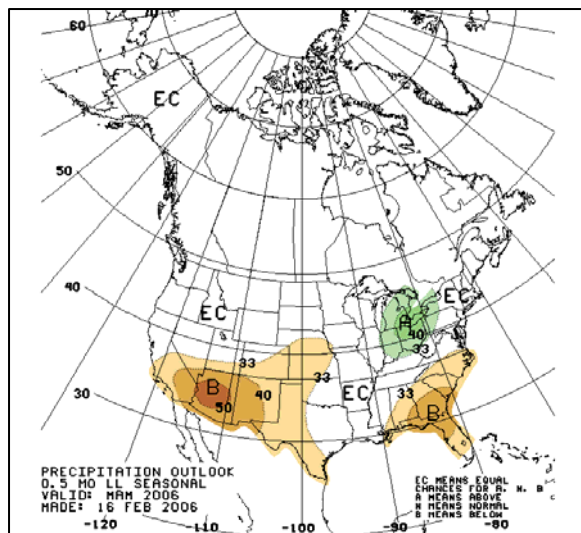
The CPC Seasonal Drought Outlook (below) indicates drought conditions in all of Arizona except the extreme western part of the state will persist through May 2006. The CPC outlook for the 90-day period, March through May 2006, indicates considerable confidence temperatures will be above average and precipitation below average.

Also see *Southwest Climate Outlook - February 2006*
www.ispe.arizona.edu/climas/forecasts/swoutlook.html.

For additional weather information from the Office of the State Climatologist for Arizona -
www.public.asu.edu/~dellis/azscweather.html.



Precipitation & Temperature Outlooks



NOAA's CPC Outlooks are 3-category forecasts. As a starting point, the 1971–2000 climate record is divided into 3 categories, each with a 33.3 percent chance of occurring (i.e., equal chances, EC). The forecast indicates the likelihood of one of the extremes—above-average (A) or below-average (B)—with a corresponding adjustment to the other extreme category; the “average” category is preserved at 33.3 likelihood, unless the forecast is very strong. Thus, using the NOAA-CPC temperature (precipitation) outlooks, areas with light brown (green) shading display a 33.3–39.9 percent chance of above-average, a 33.3 percent chance of average, and a 26.7–33.3 percent chance of below-average temperature (precipitation). A shade darker indicates a higher than 40.0 percent chance of above-average, a 33.3 percent chance of average, and a further reduced chance of below-average temperature, and so on. Equal Chances (EC) indicates areas with an equal likelihood of above-average, average, or below-average conditions; it is used by forecasters when the forecast tools do not indicate a strong “signal” conditions during a given period will be in any one of the three categories.

This report was based on the data and information through January 31, 2006. It does not reflect current conditions.